BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

Education Report

Canadian hero inspires B.C. students

The Province and the Rick Hansen Foundation are working together to teach B.C. students the benefits of leadership, teamwork, and building an inclusive community. The Province is contributing $500,000 to the Rick Hansen School Program, which includes leadership awards, tips for schools hosting a sports day or Schools in Motion event, and teacher resources. Read more.

At right: *Minister Bond and Rick Hansen at Maywood Community School in Burnaby.*

HOT TOPIC

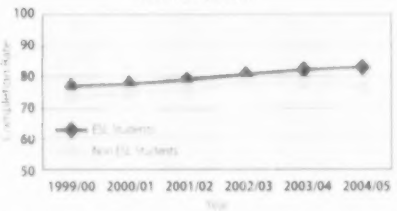
B.C.'s ESL students do well in school. Since 1997-98, ESL completion rates have risen 10 per cent. In 2004-05, 83 per cent of ESL students completed high school, compared to 77 per cent of non-ESL students.

Last year there were 57,585 full-time-equivalent (FTE) ESL students at B.C. public schools – 2,631 more than in 2004-05 – and nearly 10 per cent of B.C.'s public school population.

The Ministry of Education recognizes the additional cost of providing ESL programs by providing school districts with an additional $1,100 for each FTE student enrolled in ESL.

B.C. is a leader in ESL and second languages. The Province recently made some improvements to its second languages program by:

Six-Year Dogwood Completion Rate - Public School
1999/00 - 2004/05



- enhancing testing with a focus on listening and speaking
- expanding Advanced Placement course options by adding Chinese, Japanese and Italian
- providing second language students access to 3,000 provincial and district scholarships of $1,000 each. Read more.

A Mountain Alphabet
Written by Margriet Ruurs
Illustrated by Andrew Kiss

Reading Corner

The Province is providing a copy of A Mountain Alphabet to kindergarten students across British Columbia. The book features mountain paintings that inspire students to master the alphabet. This is the third year in a row that kindergarten students in B.C. will receive a book to start or grow their home library. The Province hopes these books will encourage families to read together. Public schools, alternate schools, electronic delivery and distance education schools will all receive books by the end of this month.

Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Honourable Shirley Bond
Minister of Education

Just like hundreds of thousands of students, parents, teachers, and staff across the province, I, too, went "back to school" last week.

I had the pleasure of accompanying Rick Hansen to Maywood Community School in the Burnaby school district where we joined the students and staff on their first day of school. Rick and I talked to a Grade 3 class about the Rick Hansen School Program, which encourages students to be the very best they can be and promotes awareness of disabilities.

Early Friday, as the Dalai Lama prepared to meet B.C. students, I had the privilege of making opening remarks. I spoke about the importance of the values he stresses, namely compassion and respect. Those are values we want to share as we work with school districts to make our schools safe places where students can focus on learning.

Finally, Friday was International Literacy Day. Improving reading is the foundation of this government's first great goal. To support that goal, we will be providing more than 50,000 books to kindergarten students throughout B.C. Read More. See the Reading Corner.

It's been a great start to what I am sure will be a great year. For more on back-to-school, I invite you to view my video message.